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BLOOMBERG
SCHOOL of PUBLIC HEALTH

Ethical Analysis

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Ethical Analysis

- Topics to be covered
  - Introduction to ethics
  - Framework for ethical analysis
  - Supplementing the framework

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Section A

Introduction to Ethics

Normative Ethical Theory

- Person(s)
- Actions
- Consequences

Continued

Normative Ethical Theory

- Virtue theory
- Consequentialist theory
- Non-consequentialist theory

Virtue Theory (Aristotle)

- Focus on person
- Cultivation of virtuous traits

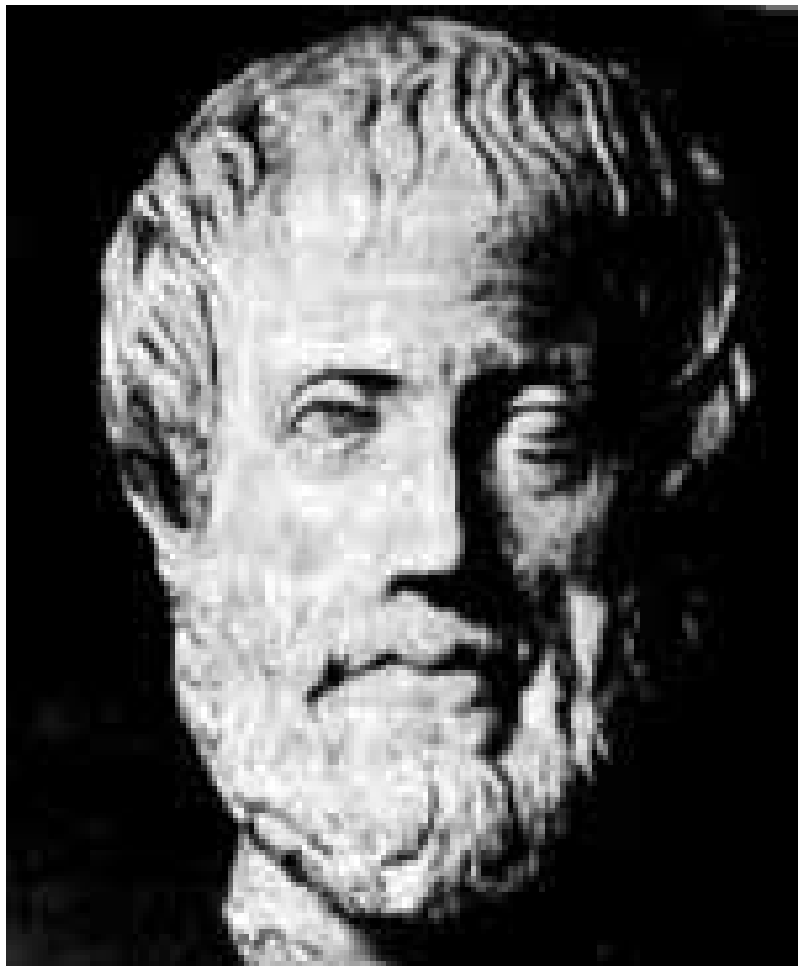

Image Source: www.epistemelinks.com

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Virtue Theory (Aristotle)

- “A just person—that is a person with the virtue of fairness—not only has the disposition to act fairly, but when so acting has a morally appropriate desire to do so. The person characteristically has a moral concern and reservation about acting in a way that would be unfair (p. 214).”

Source: Beauchamp, Tom L.(1991) Philosophical Ethics: Introduction to Moral Philosophy

Continued

Virtue Theory (Aristotle)

- Practical virtue

Consequentialism (John Stuart Mill)

- Focus on consequences of action(s)
  - Action(s) are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the opposite of happiness
- Utilitarian

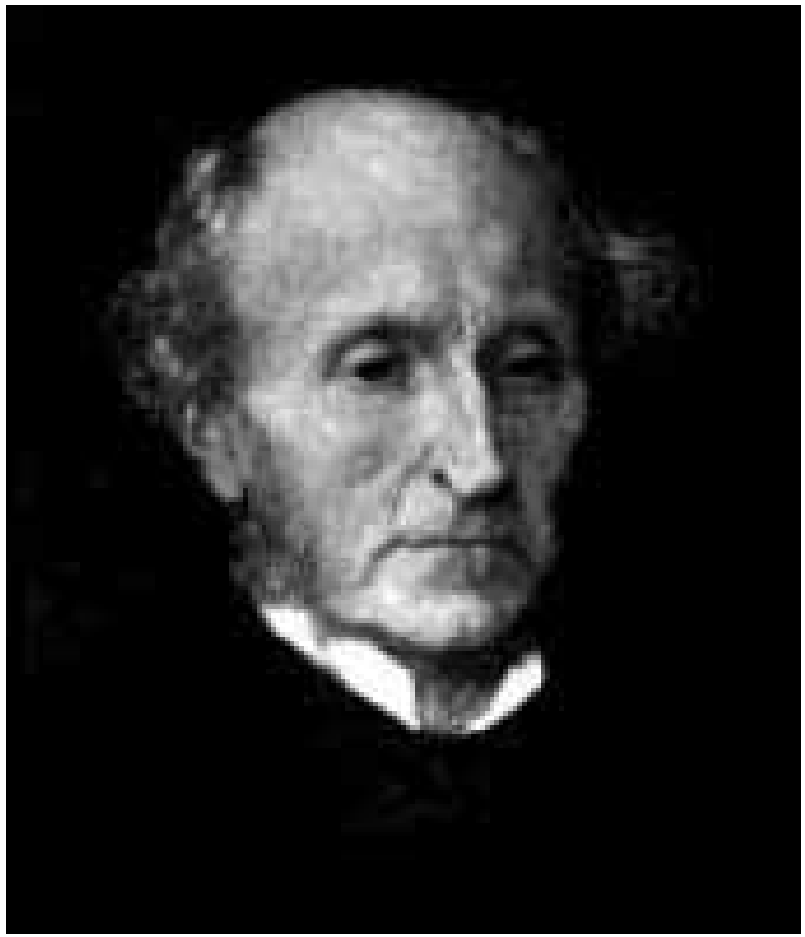

Image Source: www.philosophypages.com

Continued

Consequentialism (John Stuart Mill)

- Maximizing principle
- Impersonal perspective

Continued

Consequentialism (John Stuart Mill)

- Utility can conflict with other values
  - HIV vaccine example

Non-Consequentialism (Immanuel Kant)

- Deontologic
- Focus on action(s) taken
- Motive to act

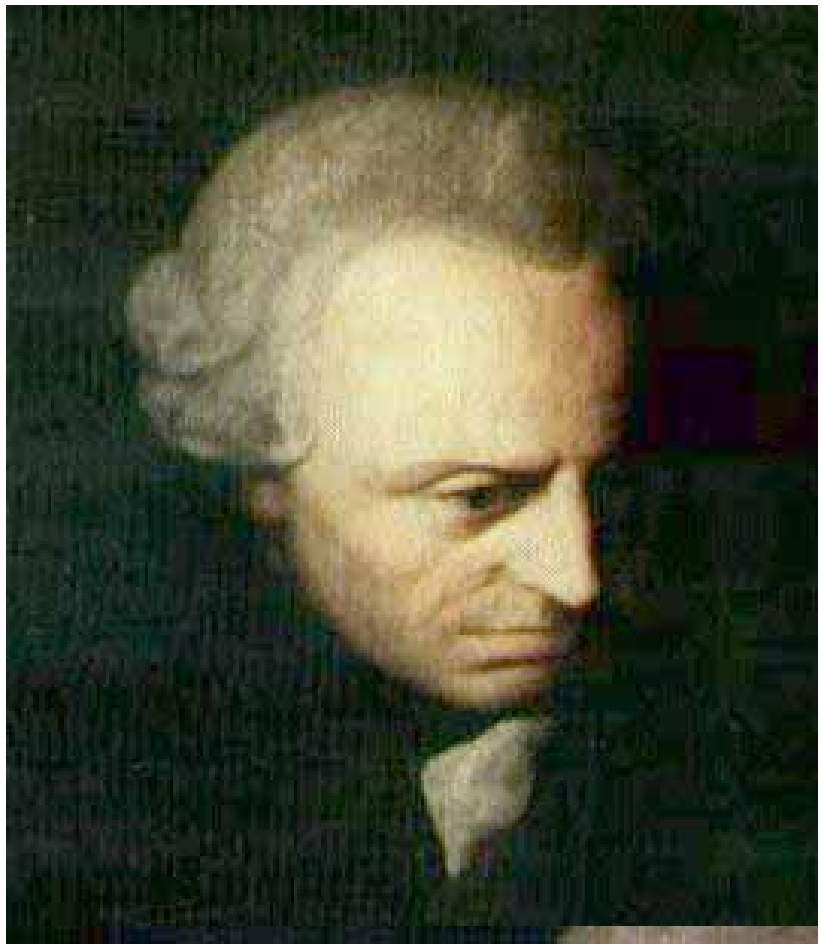

Image Source: www.artemis.austincollege.edu

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Non-Consequentialism (Immanuel Kant)

- Categorical imperative
- Respect for persons
  - Individuals should not be treated simply as means to an end

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Section B

Framework for Ethical Analysis

Framework for Ethical Analysis

Belmont Report (1978)

- Clinical practice vs. research
- Three principles
  1. Beneficence
  2. Respect for Persons
  3. Justice

Beneficence

- Moral requirements
  - Do no harm
  - Maximize benefits/minimize harms

Continued

Beneficence

- Practical applications
  - Study design
  - Risk/benefit ratio

Respect for Persons

- Moral requirements
  - Acknowledge autonomy
  - Protect those with diminished autonomy

Continued

Respect for Persons

Practical Applications

- Informed consent
  1. Information
  2. Comprehension
  3. Voluntariness

Continued

Respect for Persons

Practical Applications

- Informational privacy and confidentiality
  - Primary data collection
  - Secondary data analysis

Justice

- Moral requirement
  - Equals should be treated equally
  - To each an equal share
  - To each according to effort
  - To each according to societal contribution
  - To each person according to merit

Continued

Justice

Practical Applications

- Fair procedures for selection of study subjects
  - Individual
  - Social
- Gender/minority equity

Supplementing Framework

- Casuist perspective (Jonsen and Toulmin)
- Relationship paradgim (King, Henderson, Stein)

Continued

Supplementing Framework

Principlist Paradigm

- Balancing principles
- Ethical universalism
- Atomistic focus

Relationship Paradigm

- Layering of relevant relationships
- Context-based
- Cross-cutting issues
- Narrative focus
- Continuity
- Change

Summary

- Goal—create thoughtful principlists